

## Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 03820 101744Z

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TAGS: PFOR, NATO, XA, XB, XE, XF, XH, UR, XM

SUBJ: NATO REGIONAL EXPERTS MEEGINS

TRANSMITTED BELOW IS THE TEXT OF A REPORT ADDRESSED TO THE NATO POLITICAL COMMITTEE BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL EXPERTS GROUPS GIVING HIM ASSESSMENT OF THE WORK OF THE EXPERTS UNDER THE NEW PROCEDURES ADOPTED BEFORE THEIR SPRING, 1974, CYCLE OF MEETINGS. THE REPORT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON JULY 23. MISSION COMMENTS FOLLOW SEPTTEL.

BEGIN TEXT.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL EXPERT GROUPS

1. EARLY THIS YEAR THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE DECIDED TO INTRODUCE, ON A TRIAL BASIS, A NUMBER OF CHANGES IN THE WORKING METHODS OF THE REGIONAL EXPERT GROUPS (DOCUMENTS AC/119-R(74)5 AND AC/119-R(74)7). THE COMMITTEE WILL NO DOUBT WISH TO CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF THESE CHANGES ONCE IT HAS HEARD THE VIEWS OF THE EXPERTS ON THESE GROUPS. I FEEL THAT IT MAY BE USEFUL MEANWHILE TO GIVE IT MY OWN IMPRESSIONS OF THIS EXPERIMENT.

2. I WOULD RECALL THAT THE MAIN CHANGES AGREED BY THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE WERE AS FOLLOWS: THE EXPERT GROUPS ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NATO 03820 101744Z

MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB WERE MERGED; THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE EXPERT GROUPS ON THE FAR EAST AND LATIN AMERICA WERE REDUCED TO THREE DAYS (AT THE REQUEST OF THE EXPERTS, THE EXPERT GROUP ON AFRICA, TOO, ONLY MET FOR THREE DAYS); THE

SECOND READING OF THE DRAFT REPORTS WAS ABOLISHED IN THE CASE OF THOSE GROUPS WHOSE SESSIONS HAD BEEN SHORTENED; IN THE CASE OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE FAR EAST, THE FIRST DRAFT WAS PREPARED BY THE CHAIRMAN.

3. THE IMMEDIATE RESULT OF THE MERGER OF THE EXPERT GROUPS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB WAS TO ALLOW A COMPREHENSIVE DISCUSSION OF AN AREA WHICH IS FAIRLY HOMOGENEOUS, BOTH GEOGRAPHICALLY AND POLITICALLY. IN ADDITION, THE MERGER REMOVED THE COMPLICATED PROBLEM OF THE SPHERE OF COMPETENCE OF THE TWO GROUPS, CREATED BY THE FACT THAT LIBYA COULD BE DEEMED TO BELONG TO EITHER ONE OR OTHER OF THE TWO AREAS. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, HOWEVER, THE CHANGES HAVE NOT BEEN WHOLLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO ALL DELEGATIONS SINCE, IN SOME NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS, THE MAGHREB AND MIDDLE EAST ARE DEALT WITH BY DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS AND IN OTHERS THE MAGHREB IS ATTACHED TO AFRICA. SOME COUNTRIES HAVE THEREFORE HAD TO SEND A SPECIAL EXPERT ON THE MAGHREB WHO INSTEAD OF SPENDING 24 HOURS IN DIFFICULTIES, HOWEVER, THE NEW SYSTEM SEEMS WORTH KEEPING.

4. THE REDUCTION OF CERTAIN WORKING SESSIONS TO THREE DAYS, TOGETHER WITH THE ABOLITION OF THE SECOND READING OF THE DRAFT, HAS EVERYTHING TO RECOMMEND IT. FOR INSTANCE, IT ALLOWS THE EXPERTS TO SAVE AT LEAST ONE HALF DAY AND A NIGHT IN BRUSSELS AND COMPELS THEM TO CHANNEL THEIR DISCUSSIONS AND TO PREPARE A FINAL DRAFT AS FROM THE FIRST READING. THIS SYSTEM COULD, IN MY OPINION, USEFULLY BE ADOPTED BY THE EXPERT GROUP ON THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE WHOSE SESSION COULD BE CUT BACK FROM FIVE DAYS TO FOUR. ON THE OTHER HAND, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT, GIVEN THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE EXPERTS ON THAT AREA SHOULD CONTINUE TO MEET FOR FOUR DAYS, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY WILL ALSO BE DEALING WITH MAGHREB.

5. THE PREPARATION OF THE FIRST DRAFT REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN, WHICH WAS TESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE MEETING OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON LATIN AMERICA, IS CERTAINLY FEASIBLE BUT RAISES A SERIOUS PROBLEM INASMUCH AS THE MEETINGS OF EXPERT CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NATO 03820 101744Z

GROUPS FOLLOW EACH OTHER WITHOUT A BREAK FOR SEVERAL WEEKS AND THE CHAIRMAN THUS HAS NO TIME TO PREPARE HIS DRAFT IN ADVANCE. HIS TASK IS MADE ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT BY THE FACT THAT THE NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH ARE REQUIRED FOR THIS WORK GENERALLY DO NOT REACH HIM UNTIL THE DAY BEFORE THE MEETINGS ARE DUE TO START AND IN SOME CASES ON THE DAY AFTER. THE DRAFT THEREFORE HAS TO BE PREPARED IN A SINGLE AFTERNOON BY SOMEONE WHOSE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IS INEVITABLY LESS EXTENSIVE THAN THAT OF THE EXPERTS, AND THERE IS CONSEQUENTLY A DANGER THAT IT MAY NOT DEAL WITH THE ISSUES IN SUFFICIENT DEPTH. MOREOVER, THE EXPERTS HAVE A FREE HALF-DAY IN BRUSSELS WHILE THE DRAFT IS BEING PREPARED. I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THEY ARE ABLE TO MAKE GOOD USE OF THIS TIME BUT THE TOTAL LENGTH OF

THEIR STAY IN BRUSSELS REMAINS UNCHANGED.

6. IN SHORT, I FEEL THAT THE DRAWBACKS OF THIS NEW SYSTEM  
OUTWEIGH ITS ADVANTAGES ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT WHOLLY UNWORKABLE.

7. THE EXPERTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB HAVE  
COMPLAINED THAT THEIR WORK OVERLAPS WITH THAT OF THE AD HOC  
GROUP ON THE MEDITERRANEAN. IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT THE  
REFERENCE, SUBSTANCE AND FORM; THEY HAVE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS  
AND EXAMINE THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST FROM DIFFERENT  
ANGLES. TO AVOID THE IMPRESSION OF DUPLICATION, THE NORMAL  
PROCEDURE, ABANDONED THIS YEAR IN VIEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES,  
WHEREBY THE EXPERT GROUP MEETS BEFORE THE AD HOC GROUP, SHOULD  
BE RESTORED. THERE IS ALSO A NEED TO DEFINE THE COMPETENCE OF  
THE TWO GROUPS MORE CLEARLY AND IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE IF THE  
AD HOC GROUP IN PARTICULAR DID NOT GO INTO QUESTIONS OF SUBSTANCE  
AFFECTING RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES.  
END TEXT.RUMSFELD

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